

Our County  
D. Gary Davis  
County Mayor

Wednesday, September 30, 2020

September has long been identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency as the month to remind everyone of the extreme value of proper Emergency Preparedness at all levels of government and also our individual lives. Our local Cleveland Bradley County Emergency Management Agency works tirelessly to help provide a network to assist in keeping us all safe and secure.

One of the constants in life is CHANGE and this process has been active recently within our local Emergency Management Agency. Since the multiple tornadoes that caused catastrophic damage across Bradley County and our region back in April of 2011, we have become very accustomed to the benefit and the use of our “NIXLE” early warning emergency notification system. With more than 27,000 citizens that had signed up for this free service, it had become a “second nature” benefit for our citizens. But while this system was free to the end-user, it was not free to Bradley County. With a proposed increase of more than double, if not almost triple, of its current price of providing this service with no increase in service capabilities a search was conducted for its replacement. We are thankful for the service of NIXLE in the past but we are also extremely optimistic about its replacement with a “tried and true” system known nationwide as “CIVIC READY”. Within the first week of the change, our Emergency Management Agency professionals are pleased to announce that over 12,000 people have migrated to the new system. Please text “join cbcema” to the phone number of “30890” and this will place you into the new system for the opportunity to receive alerts, severe weather notifications and other community emergency communications.

We often think that these processes and abilities just happen, but they are the work of a small group of professionals who work tirelessly to network with other professionals locally, at the state, and also the national level to make these operations not only possible but also function well for our community. Director Troy Spence has spent more than a decade within this role and for multiple decades within numerous emergency service providers as an employee and also volunteer. He explained to me recently that he is extremely pleased with the employees of our EMA. With COVID-19 and the other developments that have occurred recently, this has been the busiest

time within his offices that he can ever remember. During this busy time, his offices have also survived a staff change as well. In progressing successfully through this activity in a time of uncharted territory known as the results of COVID-19 says a lot about the people who work at, and with, our local Emergency Management Agency.

With Jerry Johnson moving to the Sheriff's office to oversee the correctional department, Alex Fallin transferred from the Bradley County Fire and Rescue's Fire Marshall position to become the newest Operations Officer within our Emergency Management Agency. He is enjoying the new challenges of his post and described the change in job descriptions as going from short term immediate actions required in Fire and Rescue to save lives and preserve property due to fire, to long term planning on how to best prepare for all worst-case scenarios that may, or may not, occur locally. This past week was also the time they said goodbye to Curtis Cline as he retired from active service. For 9 years he served with excellence as their Administrative Officer primarily and held numerous other duties including their LEPC (Local Emergency Planning Committee) director. With 3 grandchildren and numerous other tasks awaiting his attention he mentioned on his last day present that he will miss the people and the process of "spending 90% of your time getting ready for things that you hope will never happen". Scott Ratcliff will assume his duties and brings a wealth of knowledge of audiovisual production and construction skills developed from years of working locally at Burris Construction and Perry Stone Ministries previously.

We are blessed with numerous people, processes, and priorities that converge to help keep us all safe at our home, our work, and recreation activities. I remain thankful for the amazing people who help make the tried and true as well as the latest technology that is constantly being updated to help make this possible. This process of providing "Civic Ready" tools and emergency preparedness initiatives are even more reasons that Bradley County remains Tennessee at its best!

The COVID-19 numbers continue to improve but we must also continue our diligence in helping to prevent an uptick in cases. May we all please remember to wash our hands or use sanitizer, keep the 6 ft. rule, avoid large gatherings, and wear a mask when around other people. Let's all do our part to also care about, others.

